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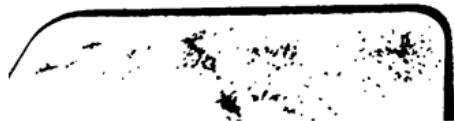
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THE LESSON
OF DILIGENCE

1489
f. 1796

1489. f. 1796.





1489. f. 1796.



THE
LESSON OF DILIGENCE,

And other Stories.

BY THE REV. RICHARD NEWTON.



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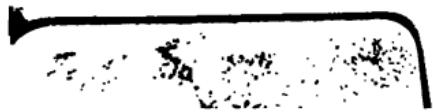


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great God, whose throne is in heaven, and who governs thousands of worlds, should make a law about so small a thing as a bird's nest! But it only shows how good God is.

This command about birds' nests is not an important one. But when God speaks about more important things, He gives not merely *one* command, but many. The lesson of diligence, of which we are now speaking, is very important. It is important for the body, as well as the soul. It is important for this world, as well as for the next; and so God repeats it in the Bible. In looking through the Bible, I found, in a short time, between thirty and forty different commands that God has given, to teach us the lesson of diligence. We find these commands both in the Old Testament and in the New. They are repeated in different words, in order that we may lay them to heart.

God commands diligence about the affairs of this life, when He says to us, 'Be thou *diligent* to know the state of thy flocks and of thine herds' (Prov. xxvii. 23). In the times when the Bible was written, the

principal property of people was in cattle. This, then, is an Old Testament command to diligence in our worldly affairs. And the Apostle Paul gives us a similar command in the New Testament, when he says, ‘Be not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord’ (Rom. xii. 11). This refers to business of all kinds. And it shows how diligent God desires us to be in all things.

And then God commands us to be diligent about our souls as well as our bodies. This is what He means when He says, ‘Keep thine *heart* with all *diligence*; for out of it are the issues of life’ (Prov. iv. 23). And this is what He means, too, when He says, ‘Give *diligence* to make your calling and election sure’ (2 Pet. i. 10)—that is, be diligent in trying to save your souls.

And God bids us use diligence in the words of our text—‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’ This is one of God’s commands about diligence. It means that we do all things we have to do in the best and most faithful way.

Let me tell you about a Sunday school

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boy, whose name was Abel Baker; how he obeyed this command of God, and the good that came from his obedience.

The Sunday school that Abel attended was in England. One day the superintendent of the school took the words of our text as the subject of an earnest address. He told the scholars that this was God's command to every one of them; and that God wanted them all to learn the lesson of diligence, and do everything they had to do in the very best way they could. Abel listened attentively to every word the superintendent said. He was a steady little fellow, fond enough of fun in a quiet way; but inclined to be lazy, especially in studying his lessons. While listening to the superintendent, he remembered how often his mother had to scold him for only half doing what he had to do; and he made up his mind that she should no longer have cause to find fault. He thought it would not be so very hard to do this, except in his lessons. He was not a very smart scholar. *It took him a long time to learn his lessons, even in the poor way in which he generally*

said them ; and if he should undertake to get them perfectly, he thought he would have no time for play. But still his teacher's words pressed hard upon him. On his way home he repeated the text to himself, to fix it in his memory : ‘ Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’ He thought about this, and said to himself, ‘ This word “ *whatsoever* ” is a pretty big word. It takes in lessons, as well as play and work. Geography, spelling lessons, sums, and everything must be done in this way. This is pretty hard ; but I’ll try.’

And he did try. From that day he began to be diligent. He went to work with a will. He studied his lessons, and did everything with all his might. When he left school, he was bound apprentice to a blacksmith. He remembered this lesson of diligence still, and practised it too. He swung his hammer vigorously, and made the anvil ring again. All the old laziness which he had when a boy was overcome. He was active, industrious, and diligent ; not *only* in his trade, but in all things. He

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became a Christian, and joined the church ; and he was just as diligent in his religion as he was in his business. He was known to be the best blacksmith in that part of England. He never slighted anything. ‘ Whatsoever his hand found to do, he did it with his might.’ And now see what came of this habit of diligence.

The London Missionary Society had resolved to build a missionary ship. One of the missionaries, who was going out in her, had been the Sunday school teacher of Abel Baker. He knew what a good blacksmith he was, and he got him engaged to make one of the anchors and chains for the ship ; for he knew it would be well made.

The vessel is finished and furnished. She has started on her way, and has nearly reached the end of her voyage in safety. Then she encounters a fearful storm. The wind is driving her on towards a rocky island in the Pacific Ocean. All on board hear the roar of the breakers. Unless the vessel can be kept from drifting, she will soon be dashed to pieces, and all on board must perish. What is to be done ? Above

the howling of the storm the captain's voice is heard crying, 'Let go the anchor!' 'Ay, ay, sir,' is the ready answer of the crew. Away goes the anchor to the bottom of the sea. For a moment the vessel stops drifting. But will the anchor be able to hold her? No. A huge wave strikes the ship. A sharp sound is heard;—the chain has snapped, and the ship is drifting again towards the breakers. 'Let go another anchor!' It goes, and fails, like the first. A third is tried, but with no better success. There is only one more left. This is a smaller one than the others, and the chain is lighter; but it had been carefully made by hand, instead of by machinery. They look at it in doubt and fear. It does not seem worth while to try that slender thing, when the heavier chains had snapped like thread. 'Try it, try it,' said one of the missionaries. 'My old scholar, Abel Baker, made it; and I know it is made in the best way that a chain can be made.'

Away goes Abel Baker's anchor. It is their last hope. If that fails, then they must perish. How anxiously they watch

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the result ! The anchor reaches the bottom—it holds—the ship stops drifting. But will it continue to bear the strain upon it ? The vessel rises and falls with the swelling waves ; the chain swings backwards and forwards ; the anchor holds. The vessel is held steady till the storm is over, and they are saved. The anchor and the chain that Abel Baker made '*with his might*,' saved that ship.

And thus we see, my dear children, how much good was done by one scholar remembering this short text. It saved a noble ship with the lives of those faithful missionaries, and of all on board.

We ought to learn this lesson of diligence, in the first place, because of the *commands* God has given us.

But, in the second place, we should learn this lesson of diligence because—of the PROMISES God has given about it.

How good in God to give promises to stir us up to our duty ! He was not obliged to do this. He might have given commands, *and then have threatened punishment if we did not obey them.* But He has not done

so. There are indeed threatenings in God's word, which we ought to heed. But then the Bible is filled with great and precious promises; and very many of these are promises about diligence. Let us now look at some of them.

In the book of Proverbs, xiii. 4, we read: 'The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but *the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*' A fat soul means one that is ripening like fruit on a tree, and growing in right, and good, and holy feelings. This is a promise that if we are diligent in reading the Bible, and praying, and attending Sunday school and church, then God will bless our souls, and make them prosper. There are other promises also: 'He that *diligently seeketh good, secureth favour*' (Prov. xi. 27). 'He that dealeth with a slack hand becometh poor; but *the hand of the diligent maketh rich*' (Prov. x. 4). 'The slothful shall be under tribute; but *the hand of the diligent shall bear rule*' (Prov. xii. 24). 'The thoughts of the diligent tend only to *plenteousness*' (Prov. xxi. 5). 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business? *he shall stand before kings;* he

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shall not stand before mean men' (Prov. xxii. 29).

But we cannot repeat all the promises that God gives in His word about the blessings He will bestow on those who learn and practise the lesson of diligence. In the world around us, as well as in the Bible, we find illustrations of this grand truth.

Two men in Philadelphia can be referred to as illustrating the truth of God's promises about diligence. One of these is George W. Childs, the publisher of the daily paper called the *Ledger*, well known throughout the country; and the other is Jay Cooke, the banker.

They came to the city as poor boys. But, young as they were, they had learned the lesson of diligence. They began to practise it, and kept on practising it. God has blessed and prospered them. They have been successful in business, and earned honour and respect from all. They are striking illustrations—not taken from books nor brought from distant lands, but found in our homes—of the truth of God's promise, when He saith, 'The hand of the diligent

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maketh rich.' They are getting good to themselves, and doing good to others, here and elsewhere, by the lesson of diligence which they have learned and practised.

There was once a German duke who disguised himself, and, during the night, placed a large stone in the middle of the road near his palace.

Next morning a sturdy peasant, named Hans, came that way with his lumbering ox-cart. 'Oh, these lazy people!' said he. 'Here is this big stone, right in the middle of the road, and no one will take the trouble to put it out of the way.' And so Hans went on scolding about the laziness of the people.

Then came a gay soldier along. A bright plume waved from his helmet, and a sword dangled by his side, as he went singing on his way. He held his head so high that he did not see the stone; so he stumbled over it, and fell with his sword between his legs. This stopped his song; and he began to storm at the country people, and called them 'boors and blockheads, for leaving a huge

stone in the road to break a gentleman's shins on.' So he passed along.

Now came a company of merchants, with pack-horses and goods, on their way to the fair that was to be held at the village near the duke's palace. When they came to the stone, the road was so narrow that they had to go in single file on either side. One of them, named Berthold, cried out:

'Did anybody ever see the like of that big stone, lying here all the morning, and never a soul putting a hand to it ?'

It lay there for three weeks, and no one took the trouble to remove it. Then the duke sent word to all the people on his lands to meet at a deep cut in the road, called the Dornthou, near where this rock lay, as he had something to tell them.

The day came, and crowds gathered at the Dornthou. Old Hans, the farmer, was there, and so was Berthold, the merchant. Hans said: 'I hope my lord duke will now find out what a lazy set of people he has under him.'

'*Shame on them!*' said Berthold. And *now a loud horn was heard*, and the people

stretched their necks, and strained their eyes, looking towards the castle, as a splendid cavalcade came galloping on to the Dornthou. The duke rode up to the cut, got down from his horse, and, smiling, spoke thus to the people :

‘ My friends, it was I who put this stone here, three weeks ago. Every passer-by has left it, just where it was, and has scolded his neighbour for not taking the trouble to remove it.’

When he had spoken these words, he stooped down and lifted up the stone. Underneath was a round hollow, lined with white pebbles, and in it lay a small leathern bag. The duke held up this bag, so that all the people might see what was written on a piece of paper fastened to the bag. These were the words :—

‘ FOR HIM WHO LIFTS THE STONE.’

He untied the bag, turned it upside down, and out of it fell a beautiful gold ring, and twenty large, bright golden coins.

Then every one wished that he had been diligent enough to move the stone, instead

of going round about it, and finding fault with his neighbour. They all lost that prize because they had not learned the lesson or formed the habit of diligence. And *we* shall lose many a prize if we do not form this habit. That bag of money was the duke's promise of a reward to diligence; but it was hidden under the stone, so that no one could see it. God's promises to the diligent are not hidden in this way; they are written plainly in the Bible, so that we may all see and understand them.

Dr. Franklin used to say: 'What though you have found no treasure, and had no legacy left you! Never mind. Remember that diligence is the mother of good luck. God gives all things to industry.'

"Then plough deep while sluggards sleep,
And you'll have corn to sell and keep."

'Work while it is called to-day, for you know not how you may be hindered to-morrow. One to-day is worth two to-morrows; and never leave till to-morrow anything that *can* be done to-day.'

The second reason why we ought to learn

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this lesson of diligence is because of the promises God has given about it:

The third reason why we ought to learn this lesson is, because—of the EXAMPLES God has given.

If we look into the Bible, we find many examples of persons who had learned this great lesson of diligence. They practised it and found God's promises true. Nearly all the good men of whom we read in the Bible were diligently engaged in attending to their business when God called them to work for Him, in the different ways which have made them famous in the world.

There is Moses, for example. He was diligently attending to his flocks in the desert when God appeared to him in the burning bush, and sent him on the great work of delivering His people Israel out of Egypt, and of leading them through the wilderness in such a wonderful way.

There is Gideon, in the time of the Judges. He was diligently engaged in threshing wheat when the angel of God came to him, and told him how he was to deliver Israel from their enemies, who were oppressing them.

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There is David. He was only a boy when Samuel came to anoint him to be king over Israel in the place of Saul. But, boy as he was, he *had* learned the lesson of diligence. He was not playing or idling about, but was industriously employed in taking care of his father's sheep.

When God directed Elijah to appoint Elisha as prophet in his place, he found him diligently engaged in ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. And when our Saviour made choice of the men who were to be His apostles, and spread the glad tidings of salvation through the earth, some, like Andrew and Peter, were diligently engaged in fishing, and others, as James and John, were mending their nets.

God promised to bless Jacob when he left his father's house and went to live with his uncle Laban. And He did bless him, and made him very rich. But He did not bless him in idleness. Jacob was a pattern of steady industry and untiring diligence; and it was in this way that the blessing came to him. And it was the same with his son Joseph. Whether he was in the house of

Potiphar, or in the prison of the captain of the guard, he attended diligently to the duties before him,—and it was *this*, through God's blessing, that brought him to stand before Pharaoh as the ruler over the land of Egypt.

And when we look outside of the Bible, how many examples we find of the good that follows the habit of diligence! Let us look at one or two of them.

A few years ago, a gentleman, who kept a large drug-store in Boston, advertised for a boy. The next day a number of boys applied for the situation. One of them was a queer-looking little fellow. He came with his aunt, who took care of him. Looking at the poor boy, the merchant said promptly, ‘Can't take *him*; he's too small.’

‘I know he's small,’ said his aunt; ‘but he's *willing* and *faithful*. Please try him, sir.’

There was something in the boy's look which made the merchant think again. A partner in the firm came forward, and said, he ‘didn't see what they wanted with such a boy—he wasn't bigger than a pint pot.’ Still the boy was allowed to stay, and put to work,

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Not long after a call was made on the clerks for some one to stay through the night. They all held back but little Charley, who instantly offered his services. In the middle of the night the merchant came to the store, to see if all was right, and was surprised to find Charley busy cutting out labels.

'What are you doing?' he asked. 'I didn't tell you to work all night.'

'I know you didn't, sir; but I thought I had better be doing something than be idle.'

In the morning, when the merchant came into his office, he said to the cashier, 'Double Charley's wages. His aunt said he was *willing*, and so he is.'

A few weeks after this a menagerie passed through the streets. Naturally enough, all hands in the store rushed out to see it; but Charley stayed in his place. A thief saw his chance, and entered by the back door. Suddenly, he found himself seized by the young clerk, and held down to the floor. Not only was he prevented from stealing, but things taken from other stores were found upon him and returned to their owners.

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‘What made you stay to watch, when all the others quitted their work to look?’ asked the merchant.

‘You told me never to leave the store, sir, when others were absent, and so I thought I ought to stay.’

The order was repeated: ‘Double that boy’s wages. His aunt said he was *faithful*, and so he is.’

Before he left the clerkship, he was getting a salary of 2500 dollars a year, and now he is a member of the firm. Here is an example of diligence leading to success. And no boy or girl, man or woman, will be long out of a place who learns the lesson of diligence and practises it in this way.

A long time ago, there was an old king in Europe who owned a splendid forest, filled with deer and all kinds of game. At the edge of this forest lived an old peasant, named Cuno, whose duty it was to take care of the forest. He had a son named Hanschen, about sixteen years old. The king was very fond of hunting. He was himself an excellent archer, and he desired to encourage his people in skilful archery.

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He gave notice once, that on the next New Year's day he would assemble all the young men in that part of the country, under twenty years of age, in the park near his favourite palace, for a trial of skill in shooting, and that the best Bowman should receive a valuable prize.

Time passed on. New Year's day came round, and the young men from all parts of the country gathered in the park. The mark was a new gold coin, in the centre of the target, that was covered with silver paper. It was placed at the distance of seventy yards, and each archer was to have three shots.

The shooting began very briskly, and went on for a time, without any one hitting the mark, though several struck the silver paper. When all the rest had tried, without success, the king feared that no one would win the prize. Then old Cuno called for his son Hanschen to try his skill.

Hanschen, plainly dressed in home-spun clothes, and awkward in his movements, *because unaccustomed to such fine company, calls forth the merriment of the gentle-*

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men's sons around him. He cares not for this.

He takes up his bow, and fits an arrow to it. He carefully draws the string to his ear, and takes a steady aim. The arrow flies through the air. It strikes the mark in the centre, and brings it to the ground. A loud shout of applause bursts from the admiring crowd. Then the king takes from one of his attendants a piece of parchment, and reads as follows:—

‘To the person who wins this prize I give the forest in which my faithful old servant Cuno lives.’ Thus Hanschen became the owner of that valuable property. And how did he gain it? Not by what we call ‘good luck,’ but by practising the lesson of diligence.

No sooner did he hear that the king had offered a prize to the best Bowman than he began to practise, and he kept on practising all the year. Day by day, and many times a day, he would take his bow and arrows and practise in the forest, shooting at leaves and other marks that he set up. It was simply by the habit of diligence that he

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won the prize. And the one reason why the other young men lost that prize was, that they had *not* learned the lesson of diligence.

'There, that'll do,' said Harry, throwing down the shoebrush; 'my boots don't shine much. No matter. Who cares?'

'Whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well,' said a serious but pleasant voice.

Harry started and turned round to see who spoke. It was his father. Harry blushed. His father said, 'Harry, my boy, your boots look very dull. Pick up your brush, and make them shine; and then come to me in the library.'

'Yes, pa,' replied Harry, pouting, and taking up his brush in no very good humour; still he brushed away at the dull boots till they shone again. Then he went into the library, and his father said:

'My son, I want to tell you a short story. I once knew a poor boy whose mother taught him the good old proverb, "Whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well." That boy became a servant in a gentleman's family. He remembered his mother's proverb. He was diligent in everything he had

to do. His employer was pleased with him, and removed him from the house to his store. He was diligent there also. When he swept out the store, he swept it well. When he was sent on an errand, he did it quickly and faithfully. When told to make out a bill or enter an account, it was carefully done. This pleased his employer, and he advanced him, step by step, until he first became head clerk, then a partner; and now he is a prosperous man, and very anxious that his son Harry should learn the rule which led to his father's success.'

'Why, pa,' said Harry, 'were you a poor boy ever?'

'Yes, my son; so poor that I had to work as a boot-blacker and waiter for a living. But, by doing these things well, I soon rose to more important positions. It was learning and practising the lesson of diligence that made me, by God's blessing, a prosperous man.'

Harry never forgot his father's example. It is a good illustration of the meaning of our text, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to

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do, do it with thy might.' Let us all remember this text.

There are three things which show us the importance of learning this lesson of diligence; these are the *commands*, the *promises*, and the *examples* that God has given us about it. May God write the words of our text on my heart, and on yours, my dear children, and give us all grace to practise the lesson of diligence which they teach!

When Jesus came to save us, how diligent He was! He knew that every step He took was only bringing Him nearer to the dreadful cross to which He was to be nailed, and on which He was to bleed and die. And yet He never hesitated. He went steadily and diligently on till all His work was done and His suffering ended. And now, when He calls on you, my dear children, to do what is only for your own happiness, and to do it in order to show your love for Him, how willing and glad you should be to learn this lesson of diligence; and 'whatsoever your hand findeth to do, to do it with your might!'

THE LESSON OF FAITHFULNESS.

'Be thou faithful unto death.'—REV. ii. 10.

 O be faithful means to be honest and true. It means to do what is right; to do our duty. It means we should do this when we are alone as well as when in company; it means that we do it when it is hard and painful, just the same as when it is easy and pleasant. A faithful person you can always trust; he is ever the same, behind your back, as before your face.

Let us look at some examples of persons who were unfaithful on the one hand, and of those who were faithful on the other; and then we shall better understand what it is to be faithful.

See our first parents in the garden of Eden. Satan came, and tempted them to eat of the forbidden fruit. Had they been

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faithful to God, they would have said at once to Satan, ‘No, we cannot do this thing ; God told us we must not do it, and we will not.’ But they were unfaithful, and did not obey God. How different their lives would have been, and the experience of our world ever since, if they had only been faithful to God !

Consider next the brethren of Joseph, when he came to them at Dothan, to inquire how they were doing. They first conspired against him to kill him ; and then, changing their plans, sold him as a slave to be carried down to Egypt. How faithless were they to their aged father, when they tore his darling son so cruelly away from him ! And how unfaithful to their younger brother, when they forced him away, and compelled him to go as a stranger into a strange country !

The Bible gives us examples of a different kind, in order to teach us to be faithful. There is Noah. God told him to build the ark. It took him a hundred and twenty years to build it. The men laughed at him, and the boys made fun of his queer big boat without any sails ; yet he went steadily on

during all those many long years. '*Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*' Noah was faithful.

And so was Joseph. When Potiphar's wife tempted him to do what was very wrong, he refused, saying, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' This refusal caused him to be put in prison. But this was better than doing wrong. Joseph was three years in prison, and would rather have been there twice as long than do wrong. Joseph was faithful.

So was Daniel. He was at the head of the great kingdom of Babylon. His duties were many and great. Yet so faithful was he in attending to them, that his worst enemies could find no fault with him, except for his faithfulness to God. He prayed to God three times a-day. Daniel's wicked enemies caused the king to pass a law forbidding any one to pray for thirty days. Whoever broke this law was to be cast into the den of lions. Daniel knew this law was passed. He knew that if he went on praying, he would be thrown into that den of lions. Yet he never hesitated one moment

as to his duty. The Bible tells us that ‘he went into his house, and his windows being opened in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees, three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.’ What a faithful man Daniel was! You all know how it ended. Daniel’s example is worthy of our imitation. And this is the kind of faithfulness Jesus is speaking of in the text, when He says, ‘Be thou faithful unto death.’

This text teaches us—*the lesson of faithfulness*. It is a leaf from the Tree of Life for the cure of unfaithfulness.

And there are *three* things about faithfulness which show how important it is, and how earnestly we should try to learn and practise it.

We ought to learn the lesson of faithfulness, in the first place, because it is—so USEFUL.

Look at a mariner’s compass. It is a small, flat piece of steel, called a needle. This is placed on the fine point of a piece of iron, which is fastened in an upright position inside of a little box. It is free to turn in any direction. But God has given that

little needle the power of always turning to the north. We do not know what this power in the needle is, which makes it turn to the north. People call it *magnetism*. No one can tell what this magnetism is; but we believe in it. The wonderful power of this little needle makes it one of the most useful things in the world. When sailors go to sea, and lose sight of land, this needle is all they have to depend upon to guide them across the trackless ocean. There are hundreds of vessels, out at sea now, that never could find their way back to port if it were not for the strange power of this needle.

And faithfulness is to us just what the magnetism of that needle is to the compass. It guides us to usefulness. Faithfulness will make us honest and true. It will lead us to do what we know to be right. And then we can always be trusted. Here are some examples of persons who had learned the lesson of faithfulness, and we shall see how useful it made them.

Mr. Spurgeon gives the following illustration of the meaning of faithfulness:—He

asked a servant girl, who wished to join his church, why she thought she was converted. She said, 'I am changed in many things, sir. And there is one thing I never did before, *I always sweep under the mats now.*' This was being faithful.

A LESSON FROM WATERLOO.

A good many years ago a battle was fought between the French and the English. It was the famous battle of Waterloo. The Duke of Wellington commanded the English army, and Napoleon Bonaparte the French. In the arrangements which he made before going into battle, the Duke of Wellington ordered one of his officers, who commanded a large body of men, to take position by a bridge, on a road leading off from the field—where it was expected the battle would be fought—though some distance from it. He was ordered to occupy that position, and on no account whatsoever to leave it without orders. The officer marched his men there, and held the position assigned him.

The battle began; it was a long and

bloody one. The officer at the bridge was too far off to see what was going on, but he was within sound of it. He could hear the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry ; and as the day wore slowly on, he felt very restless at the thought of idling there while the rest of the army was fighting bravely. He wished with all his heart that he could join them ; the longer he thought of it, the more impatient he became. At last he made up his mind not to stand idle any longer. He called out to his men, ‘Forwards—march,’ and led them into battle.

At length the English gained the victory. The French were defeated, and driven from the field. Their only way of retreat was along the road, and over the bridge where the Duke of Wellington had stationed the captain and his company. This was just what he had expected. For this very purpose he had ordered the officer with his troops to occupy that position. If he had been faithful to his duty as a soldier, the Duke would not only have defeated the French army, but would have taken them prisoners. This was prevented by the mis-

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conduct of one man who had not learned the lesson of faithfulness.

The Duke was very angry when he found that his orders had been disobeyed. He reproved the officer for what he had done in the presence of the army. The sorrow and shame of the officer were so great that he died of grief. And here we see how useful this man would have been if he had been faithful.

'GOD HAS A PLAN FOR EVERY MAN.'

A soldier's widow lived in a little hut near a mountain village in the Austrian Tyrol. Her only child, Hans, was a cripple—a good, kind-hearted boy. He loved his mother fondly, and longed to help her in her poverty; but what could a poor lame boy do, who had not strength enough to join the village boys in their play? When he was fifteen years of age, it made him sad to think that he was a burden to his mother instead of being a help.

At this time, Napoleon Bonaparte, with a French army, was trying to conquer the Tyrolese, and get possession of their country

But they were brave; they loved their country, and resolved to defend it to the last. It was easy to do this, if they knew when their enemies were coming; for there were many narrow passes in the mountains where a few men could keep back a whole army.

An arrangement was made by the inhabitants, whereby they could give notice to each other when their enemies were coming. This was by signal fires. At different points through the mountains great heaps of dry materials were piled up, ready to be lighted in a moment, and then the signal fires would leap up, till every village and mountain top would seem to be in a blaze.

The village in which Hans and his mother lived lay right on the road which the French army would take in marching through the mountains, and the people were all busy getting ready for the fight. Hans and his mother had nothing to do but wait. ‘Ah! Hans,’ she said to him one evening, ‘it’s well that you are lame, or else they would make a soldier of you, and take you away from me.’ This made Hans feel very sadly. The

tears flowed down his cheeks. ‘Mother,’ said he, ‘I’m of no use. Look through our village. Everybody is busy, doing something to protect home and country ; but I can do nothing—I am useless.’

‘ My boy, my boy, you are not useless to me.’

‘ Yes, mother, even to you. I can’t work for you ; I can’t support you in your old age. Why, oh, why was I born ? ’

‘ Hush ! Hans, my dear ; don’t talk so,’ said his mother. ‘ You will live to find the truth of our old proverb :—

“ God has His plan
For every man.” ’

Soon after this the Easter holidays came on. The people of the village were all busy with the festival ; and fun, and frolic, and merry games engaged them all except Hans. At the close of Easter day, he offered his evening prayer, in which he asked God, as he was accustomed to do, to make him of some use in the world. Then he went to bed and slept.

At midnight he awoke with the thought

in his mind that the French army was coming. He tried to put away the thought; but it would return. So he got up, and dressed himself, and at once walked up the mountain path. He kept on till he reached the signal pile. To his surprise, the men who should have been watching by it had left to share in the festivities. Near the pile was an old pine tree; in a hollow place, in the trunk of the tree, was a tinder box, and tinder for kindling the pile. As Hans was standing by the old tree, a strange sound fell upon his ear; he listened attentively. Again he heard it; it was the sound of approaching footsteps. He looked steadily in the direction from which the sound came. Presently, by the dim moonlight, he saw soldiers climbing up the cliff. In a second he knew what it meant. The French army was coming, and these soldiers were sent in advance to destroy the signal pile, so that the country could not be aroused. Quick as thought, Hans struck a light, kindled the turpentine brand, and threw it blazing upon the pile. Instantly the flame leaped up; the signal was given. Quickly it was answered from

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mountain top to mountain top ; signal fires were blazing everywhere ; the people were roused ; the French army was driven back ; the country was saved.

As Hans, the hero, watched by the burning pile, a retreating soldier fired at him. The shot struck him in the shoulder ; it was a severe wound, yet he managed to get back to the village. By this time the villagers all knew who had kindled the signal fire. They gathered round him, crying, ‘ Hurrah, hurrah, for Hans ! ’ They were going to carry him on their shoulders through the village ; but when they saw he was wounded, they paused in sorrow. ‘ Carry me to my mother,’ he faintly said.

When his mother saw the blood flowing from his wound, she burst into tears. ‘ Don’t cry for me now, dear mother ; I die happy. It is true, as you said,—

“ God has His plan
For every man,”—

though we didn’t know what it was till now.’

Hans died from his wound ; but he was

happy in dying, for he had saved his country, and provided for his mother, who was well taken care of by the government for her son's faithfulness to his country.

See how useful he was! Let us think of Hans, the cripple, and try to learn the lesson of faithfulness. The first reason why we should learn this lesson is, *because it is so useful.*

The second reason why we should learn this lesson is, because it is—SO BEAUTIFUL.

God has given us the power to delight in beautiful things. And in His great goodness, God has filled the world about us with beautiful things, in order that we may find pleasure in looking at them. How beautiful the sky is, as it spreads its great arch of blue above us! How beautiful the clouds are, as they silently float through the sky! How beautiful the sun is, as it rises and sets in floods of golden glories! How beautiful is the moon, as it moves through the heavens so calmly bright! How beautiful the stars are, as they shine in the dark sky! How beautiful the hills and mountains are, as they rise in their grand forms from the

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earth! How beautiful the trees of the forest are, as they wave their leafy branches in the breeze! How beautiful the fields are, in their robes of living green! And how beautiful the flowers are, in all the loveliness of their varied forms and colours!

We thank God for all these beautiful things, because of the pleasure they give and the good they do us. And when painters make beautiful pictures, and sculptors chisel out beautiful figures in marble, we thank them too, because we love to look upon the beautiful things they make. It gives us pleasure and does us good to see things that are beautiful. And though we cannot all be painters, or sculptors, and *make* beautiful things, yet if we try, and ask God to help us, we can all be true Christians, and *do* beautiful things.

It is a pleasing thing to see a boy or girl, a man or woman, who is trying to be faithful and do what is right. Let me tell you of some boys who were faithful, and you will see how beautiful their conduct was.

THE FAITHFUL DRUMMER.

Many years ago there was a rebellion in Ireland. In the course of this rebellion, dreadful deeds were done, as well as brave and beautiful deeds. It is one of these of which I wish now to speak.

There was a drummer boy, about twelve years old, in one of the English regiments in Ireland. The little fellow was taken prisoner by the rebels, and carried his drum with him ; he was brought into a neighbouring town with other prisoners. The rebels ordered him to beat his drum to call their men together. But they knew not the loyal heart that was beating under the king's uniform. The brave little soldier, faithful to his duty, cried out, 'The king's drum should never be beaten for rebels.' As he said this, he dashed his foot into the head of the drum and broke through the parchment, so that his drum never should be used in such service again.

The rebels were very angry, and, instead of praising him for his faithfulness, they rushed upon him with their pikes, and killed

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him on the spot. Was not this a beautiful example of faithfulness, and should it not teach us a good lesson ? We belong to God, just as this young soldier belonged to the king ; and if we are only as faithful in using our hearts, and minds, and tongues, and hands, and all we have, for God's glory, as he was in using his drum for the king's honour, what beautiful things we might be doing all the time for the glory of the King of kings !

THE FAITHFUL SON.

General Havelock was one of England's best and bravest soldiers. He was an earnest Christian as well as a brave soldier. Once, while in London, a gentleman called to spend an evening with him, according to a previous invitation. In the course of the conversation, Mrs. Havelock turned to him, and said, 'My dear, where is Henry ?'—referring to her son, whom she had not seen all the afternoon. The General started to his feet.

' Why, poor fellow,' said he, ' I left him on London Bridge at twelve o'clock, and told *him to stay there till I came back*; then, in

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the hurry of business, I forgot it; and, soldier-like, I have not a doubt that he is still there, though it is now past seven o'clock.' The General ordered a cab to be called, and as he turned to go to relieve his son from his long watch on the bridge, he apologized to his friend for his absence, saying, ' You see, sir, the discipline of a soldier's family.'

In about an hour he returned, bringing Henry with him; he found him just where he had left him. The dear boy had never thought of leaving; and if his father had remained till midnight, he would not have left his post.

This is a beautiful example of faithfulness. Let us try to imitate it.

THE FAITHFUL SUNDAY SCHOOL BOY.

Not long ago, a gentleman, interested in Sunday schools, was crossing the ferry to attend his school in Brooklyn. Near him, on the boat, he noticed a bright-eyed boy, with books under his arm, who seemed to be going to school too. He began to talk with the boy, and, finally, just to see how he would feel about it, he asked him to take a

trip with him to Harlem, a place of great resort for pleasure parties on Sundays.

The boy looked at the gentleman in surprise, and said :

‘Sir, did you never read the commandments?’

‘Commandments! what are they?’ asked the gentleman.

‘Well, sir, there is one which says, “Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.”’

‘Well, what of that, my boy? Will it not be keeping it holy to go to Harlem?’

‘No, sir; that would be breaking the commandment. Excuse me, sir; but I can’t go.’

Here the gentleman took out a half dollar from his pocket, and, to try him further, said :

‘See here, my boy; come along with me, and you shall have this.’

‘No, sir; not if it were twenty-five dollars. But’—looking up archly into the gentleman’s face, he said—‘I should like to have the money though.’

‘What would you do with it?’

‘There is to be a missionary collection at our school to-day, and I should like it for that.’

‘Well, come with me to Harlem, and then you can have it for next Sunday.’

‘No, sir,’ said the boy, bringing down his foot with earnestness; ‘I cannot go to Harlem. And then I had rather you would keep the half dollar; for I am sure God would not bless money earned by Sabbath-breaking.’

That is a beautiful example of a faithful Sunday school boy.

THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERD.

There was a German shepherd boy, whose name was Gerhardt. He was a real noble fellow, although very poor. One day, as he was watching his flock feeding in a valley, on the borders of a forest, a hunter came out of the woods, and asked:

‘How far is it to the nearest village?’

‘Six miles, sir,’ said the boy; ‘but the road is only a sheep-track, and is very easily missed.’

The hunter looked at the crooked track, and then said:

‘My lad, I am hungry, tired, and thirsty. I have lost my companions, and missed my

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way. Leave your sheep, and show me the road. I will pay you well for your trouble.'

'I cannot leave my sheep, sir,' said Gerhardt; 'they would stray into the forest and be eaten by the wolves, or stolen by the robbers.'

'Well, what of that?' replied the hunter. 'They are not your sheep. The loss of one or two of them would not be much to your master, and I'll give you more money than you ever earned in a whole year.'

'I cannot go, sir,' said the shepherd, very firmly. 'My master pays me for my time, and trusts me with his sheep. If I were to sell you my time, which does not belong to me, and the sheep should get lost, it would be just the same as if I stole them.'

'Well,' said the hunter, 'will you trust your sheep with me while you go to the village and get me some food and drink and a guide? I will take good care of them for you.'

The boy shook his head. 'The sheep,' said he, 'do not know your voice, and'—here Gerhardt paused.

'And what? Can't you trust me? Do I

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look like a dishonest man?' asked the hunter.

'Sir,' said the boy slowly, 'you tried to make me false to my trust, and wanted me to break my word to my master. How do I know that you would keep your word to me?'

The hunter laughed, for he felt that he was fairly cornered. 'I see, my lad,' said he, 'that you are a good faithful boy. I will not forget you. Show me the road, and I will do the best I can.'

Just then a number of persons came out of the forest. The shepherd found, to his surprise, that the hunter with whom he had been talking was the great duke who owned all the country round, and these were his attendants.

The duke was so pleased with the faithfulness of the shepherd boy that he had him educated, and he became a rich and great man. All these examples show us how beautiful faithfulness is. And the second reason why we ought to learn the lesson of faithfulness is, because it is so beautiful.

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The third reason why we ought to learn this lesson is, because it is—SO HONOURABLE.

The highest honour we can gain is to do that which God and good people approve, and which will lead them to love and think well of us. When we do what pleases them, then we may be sure that we are doing that which is honourable. Jesus tells us that, at the last day, He will say to each of His people who has tried to serve Him truly, ‘*Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*’ That will be the highest honour that any one can win. And so, when we are doing the things that faithfulness requires of us, we may be sure that we are doing honourable things. Let us look at some examples of persons who were faithful, and we shall see how honourable the things were which they did.

DOING IT WELL.

One day there was a debate in the English House of Parliament. A gentleman, who had risen from a very humble position, was *making* a speech. A proud nobleman was *listening* to it. He was not able to answer

the gentleman's arguments, and so he thought he would stop him by reminding him of his former poverty.

'Why, sir,' said he, in a scornful way, 'I remember when you used to black my father's boots.'

Not at all ashamed of this, the gentleman stood manfully up, and looking sternly into the face of this haughty lord, proudly said, 'True, sir, and *did not I do it well?*'

Ah ! that was noble ; that was honourable. Faithfulness even in blacking boots had led that man up to his honourable position as a member of the House of Parliament. Remember these two lines from one of England's celebrated poets :

'Honour and shame from no condition rise ;
Act well your part—there all true honour lies.'

THE BOY'S TRIUMPH.

There were prizes to be given in a certain school. One of the boys, named Willie, was very anxious to secure a prize. As he was young, the other boys were ahead of him in all his studies except writing. So he made up his mind that he would try for the

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writing prize with all his might. He did try bravely, so that his copy-book would have done honour to a boy twice his age. When the time came for awarding the prizes, the chairman of the committee held up two copy-books and said :

' It would be difficult to say which of these two books is the best, but for one copy in Willie's book, which is not only superior to Charles's, but to every other copy in the same book. This copy therefore gains the prize.'

Willie's heart beat high with hope, though not unmixed with fear. Blushing deeply he said, ' Please, sir, may I see that copy ?'

' Certainly,' replied the chairman, looking a little surprised.

Willie glanced at the copy, and then handing it back, said, ' Please, sir, that is not *my* writing. It was written by an upper class boy, who took my book by mistake one day instead of his own.'

' Oh, oh !' said the chairman, ' that may alter the case.' The two books went back *again to the committee*, who, after comparing *them carefully*, gave the prize to Charley.

The boys laughed at Willie. ‘What a fool you were, Willie, to say anything about it !’ said one of them.

‘I wouldn’t have told,’ said another.

‘Nor I,’ said another, laughing. ‘The copy was in your book, and you had a right to have the benefit of it.’

Willie heard all they had to say, and then quietly replied, ‘It would not have been the truth if I had not told who wrote the copy. I had rather tell the truth, and do right, than gain a dozen prizes.’ Truth is better than gold. Noble Willie ! That was grand. You see how honourable his faithfulness was.

THE CONTRAST.

You know how much we were all shocked lately by the dreadful news of the loss of the steamer *Atlantic*, near *Halifax*. There were about a thousand persons on board of that steamer, and more than half of them perished. And, so far as we can see, it was all owing to the unfaithfulness of the captain. He was approaching the most dangerous coast in the world. The weather

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had been cloudy, which prevented him from knowing just where he was. It was a foggy night ; and yet he wickedly went to bed and slept, when he should have been at his post, carefully watching for the safety of the precious lives committed to his care. The loss of that splendid vessel through the carelessness of the captain will always cover his name with shame and dishonour.

And now let us look at a case the very opposite of this. Some years ago, the steamer Arctic was lost in the same neighbourhood. She struck another steamer, in a fog, and sank in four hours. Three hundred persons went down with her. They were all drowned.

Every steamer has a *signal gun* on board. This is put in charge of a person, who is called the signalman. His important duty when the vessel is in danger or distress, is to fire this gun, and to *keep on firing* it, so that other vessels may hear, and come to their aid. The gun on board the steamer Arctic was in charge of a young lad, named Stewart Holland. This gun it was his duty ***to stand by and fire.***

As soon as the steamer struck, all was wild uproar and confusion. Every one knew that she must sink, and all tried to find some way of escape. The engineer, the firemen, the helmsman, all deserted their posts; but *Stewart Holland never left his gun!* Women wept, and shrieked, and prayed. Strong men fell down in sudden fear. Some cursed, and swore, and raved; others sat still, pale and motionless, as the dead. During all those hours of agony, the sound of that signal gun went booming over the waters. The powder gave out. Seizing an axe, he broke open the magazine, and got a fresh supply. Again and again the sound of his gun was heard over the deep. But no ship was nigh; no help was near. A number of the passengers lowered the boats, and leaped into them. Others made a raft, and thus tried to escape from the doomed ship.

But Stewart Holland stood at his post. Though all in command might desert, yet *he* meant to be faithful. And, oh! sad to tell, as the steamer gave a lurch before going down, the faithful gun sent forth its last signal booming over the sea once more.

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And as the sea swallowed up the ill-fated vessel, the last thing seen by the survivors was that young hero standing nobly by his gun. He died at his post, ‘faithful unto death.’

And when the news of the sad calamity reached us, strong men, with trembling voices and eyes dimmed by tears, told the story to their children. And so the name of Stewart Holland became a household word throughout the land. In the words of our text, we see how literally and truly he was—*‘faithful unto death.’*

It was an honourable thing which his faithfulness led him to do, and it covers his name with glory. We may never be placed in just such a situation. But from his example, and others of which we have spoken, we should learn the lesson of faithfulness. Let us daily practise faithfulness—at home, at school, or wherever we are. Let us seek to be faithful in little things, and then we shall be faithful in those that are greater. Remember the three things connected with faithfulness, which should teach us to learn *this lesson*. We should do so, because it is

so useful, because it is so beautiful, and because it is so honourable. Let us turn the words of the text into a prayer, and ask God to give us grace to be faithful unto death, that we may receive at last the crown of life which He has promised to those who love Him.

'BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.'

'Dare to be right! dare to be true!
You have a work that none other can do;
Stand by your conscience, your honour, your faith;
Stand like a hero and battle till death.'

THE LESSON OF PATIENCE.

 GEORGE HAYS, just look here !' said little Anna Almer. 'The old grey cat has jumped through this window, and broken Cousin Alice's beautiful rose geranium. Oh, isn't it too bad ? How angry Alice will be !'

'My sister don't get angry at such things, Anna,' said George. 'I never saw her angry but once in my life, and that was when some boys worried a poor little kitten almost to death.'

'But this is so provoking, Georgy.. Anybody would be angry.'

'It is really too bad, but you see if Alice doesn't try and make the best of it.'

'Perhaps she may,' said Anna; 'but I don't see how it can be done.'

*Pretty soon Alice came into the room.
Her sunny face was beaming with the cheer-*

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ful spirit that reigned within. She was humming a tune, but she stopped suddenly before her beautiful yet broken geranium.
‘Ah! who has done this?’ she cried.

‘That ugly old cat broke it, Cousin Alice,’ said Anna; ‘I saw her myself.’

‘Poor puss, she didn’t know what mischief she was doing. It was the very pet of all my flowers. But come, little cousin, don’t look so long-faced about it; we must try and make the best of it.’

‘I don’t see that there is any best about this, Alice,’ said Anna.

‘Oh yes, there is. It is not nearly as bad as it might be. The large stalk is not injured, and it will soon put forth new shoots. This large broken branch will be lovely to make bouquets of. Let us arrange a posy for mother’s room. We will put this cluster of scarlet blossoms in a wine-glass; and you may run into the garden, and gather a few snowdrops to put with them. There, now, was there ever anything prettier? Now we will set the wine-glass in this little saucer, and arrange some geranium leaves around the edge, with more snowdrops mingled among

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them. You know, dear, how fond mother is of flowers ; and how she always thanks God for them. Now, my little cousin, don't you think there is a bright side to this accident ? I am not sure but that pussy did us a favour by giving pleasure in an unexpected way.'

'I think you have found the bright side, Alice, but I never could have done it. I almost wanted the old cat killed.'

'There is a bright side to everything, my dear Anna,' said Alice, 'if we only have patience to seek for it, and ask God to help us. Always look for the bright side. It will save you much sorrow through life, and will be like the famous stone which so many have sought for, that was to turn everything into gold.'

Surely it is wise to learn the lesson of patience, as it will help us to see the bright side in everything that happens.

Two gardeners had their crops of peas killed by the frost. One of them was very impatient under the loss, and fretted about it. The other patiently went to work to plant a new crop. After a while, the impatient man came to visit his neighbour.

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To his surprise, he found another crop of peas growing finely. He asked how this could be.

‘This crop I sowed while you were fretting,’ said his neighbour.

‘But don’t you ever fret?’ he asked.

‘Yes, I do; but I put it off till I have repaired the mischief that has been done.’

‘Why, then, you have no need to fret at all.’

‘True,’ said his friend; ‘and that’s the reason why I put it off.’

We ought to learn the lesson of patience, in the second place, because of the good it does.

Another reason why we should try to learn this lesson, and that is because of the help we have in doing so.

We have great help given, in seeking to learn this lesson, from the examples of those who have learned and practised it before us. Suppose we are trying to climb up a steep mountain. We find it very hard work. If we see no footprints of others, we may say, ‘No one has ever been along this path before. Perhaps it is impossible to reach the top of

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the mountain. What is the use of trying ?' We feel discouraged and cease striving. But if the path is well worn, and there are footprints, we know that many people have gone up the mountain—then we may feel encouraged to keep on climbing to the very top.

And so, when we have examples of those who have learned the lesson of patience, and in whom 'patience has had its perfect work,' then we may feel encouraged to try and learn this lesson for ourselves. The missionaries of the gospel, who have gone into heathen lands to teach the people and preach about Jesus, have sometimes met with so many trials and difficulties, and have had to work so long before they could see any result from their labour, that the example of their patience should be as useful as it is remarkable. In every part of the missionary field we have good examples of patience.

Dr. Judson laboured in Burmah for *seven years* before he could see any good resulting from his work. In New Zealand, the missionaries laboured for *nine years* before a

single heathen was baptized. In Eastern Africa it was *ten* years, in Western Africa *fourteen* years, and with the Moravians in Greenland *fifteen* years, and in the island of Tahiti *sixteen* years, before the missionaries saw the least sign of good for their encouragement. These are wonderful examples. And when we feel impatient and discouraged because we do not succeed at once in what we try to do, let us think of these missionaries labouring patiently on through all those dark and toilsome years, and let their example encourage us in learning the lesson of patience.

Mr. Poole was the writer of a large work on the Bible. It is called ‘Poole’s Synopsis,’ and contains the opinions of a great many different writers on the most important passages of the Bible. This work was published in nine large volumes. It took Mr. Poole sixteen years to write these books. And while he was engaged in writing them, he always rose at five o’clock in the morning, and then wrote till the close of day, with a short interval for meals. Then he would leave his study, talk with his family, and

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see his friends. After labouring in this way for sixteen years, he finished this great work. Then he visited his friends to enjoy a little rest and change. While absent, his wife—who was an ill-tempered woman, and was angry with him for a trifling matter—gathered up his papers, and threw them all into the fire. On his return, he learned to his great grief that the result of his long and patient labour had been burned, and had gone up the chimney in smoke. When he discovered his great loss, he quietly said, ‘My dear, you have done very wrong.’ The next morning he patiently went to work, and kept on, till he had written over again all that his wife had burned. An example like this ought to be a great help in learning the lesson of patience.

Here is an interesting example of patience exercised towards an idiot boy, and of the blessed results that followed.

This boy was taken to a lunatic asylum to see if anything could be done for his improvement. The asylum was under the care of Christian people, who were patient and *persevering* in their efforts to benefit the

inmates. Three pictures were taken of this boy. The first represented his condition when placed in the institution. Then, he appeared to be a hopeless idiot; he was always on the floor, rolling over and over, with his mouth wide open, and his tongue lolling out. There was not a ray of intelligence about him, and he seemed more like a beast, without a soul, than a human being. In this state he continued for six months after entering the asylum. So feeble-minded did he appear, that the teachers saw nothing in him to work upon.

One day, the wife of the physician having charge of the asylum accidentally dropped her thimble near Jimmey, as the boy was called. He stared at it for a moment, and then grunted out 'ugh.' This was the first sound he had ever uttered. The delighted wife rushed to her husband, to tell him the great fact that 'Jimmey' had said 'ugh.'

For three long months after this, the thimble was dropped every day, in the same place, before the poor boy, and it was always noticed by him with the same 'ugh.' But *nothing* else followed for three months.

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Then one day, when the thimble was dropped, 'Jimmey' put out his hand and touched it. This was a great step. At the end of the year the second picture of Jimmey was taken. Here he is no longer seen rolling on the floor, but sitting up, with faint marks of intelligence beginning to beam in his face. After this, he was taught, day by day, to pick up a little wooden pin, and place it in a hole in a blackboard. This was a still greater thing for him to do. In this way his patient teachers led him on, step by step. When he had been in the institution three years, the third picture was taken. It represents him as intelligent and pleasing in face and form, with nothing to show that he had ever been an idiot. His mind is restored, and he is reading a book. Not only this, but he has been taught 'the old, old story of Jesus and His love.' He gives good evidence of being a Christian. And the idiot who, not long since, used to rest upon and roll about the floor, and seemed to have no more mind than a stock or a stone, is now looking up to heaven, and hoping by and by to be 'equal with the angels.' I

think this is a good illustration of the meaning of our text. Here, indeed, we seem to see 'patience having her *perfect* work.' Such an example as this should help us to learn the lesson of patience perfectly.

But we must look away from these to God our Saviour for the best example of patience.

Think how He creates and preserves us, and bestows unnumbered mercies and blessings upon us ; yet how often we forget Him, and refuse to do what He tells us, and go on doing the very thing that He hates ! Think how patient He is, and how He still continues to watch over, and love, and shower down His benefits upon us ; and then we see how wonderful God's patience is. The Jews tell a good story about Abraham that illustrates this point of our subject very clearly.

The story says, that one day Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent, according to his custom, and watching for strangers passing by, that he might entertain them. As he thus watched, he saw an old man coming towards him. He was a hundred

years old, and leaned on his staff, bow down with the weight of years and infirmities. He moved slowly on. Abraham invited him into his tent. He received him kindly, and bade him rest. Abraham washed the old man's feet, and had a nice supper prepared for him. But he was surprised to see the stranger begin his meal without waiting to ask God's blessing. Abraham asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man said that he worshipped fire only, and did not acknowledge any other god.

This made Abraham angry. He thrust the old man out of his tent, without food or shelter for the night. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was. Abraham answered, 'I thrust him out of my tent, Lord, because he refused to worship Thee.'

'I have borne with him,' said the Lord, 'for an hundred years, though he denied and disobeyed me. Couldst thou not bring him with him for one night?' Abraham sought the old man, and brought him back.

gave him food and shelter, and taught him to know the true God.

Thus Abraham learned the lesson of patience, as we should do, from the example God sets in the way in which He bears with us.

How patient Jesus was all the days of His life on earth ! ‘ When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.’ And oh, how wonderfully patient when on trial before His death ! His enemies were raging round Him like wild beasts, bringing all sorts of false charges against Him. But He was calm and gentle as a lamb. In the words of Isaiah, ‘ He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.’ And we should learn the lesson of patience because of the help we have in the examples of those who have practised this lesson before us.

But this lesson of patience can be learned only by the help of God’s grace. If we ask Him in earnest prayer, He will give us also the help of His grace, and enable us to learn the lesson of patience and practise it. ‘ Let

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patience have her perfect work.' And let us look to Jesus, and offer the prayer:

'Thy fair example may we trace,
To teach us what we ought to be ;
Make us by Thy transforming grace,
Dear Saviour, daily more like Thee.'







